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CURRENT EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN FRANCE DURING THE THIRD REPUBLIC. By DR. CARL DORFELD in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für ausländisches Unterrichtswesen*, July 1896.

EVERY nation that has passed through the throes of so terrible a catastrophe as did France during the "terrible year," will utilize all its resources and introduce any necessary reforms to reestablish and strengthen itself. History shows that it is the education of the young, in whom the vanquished state naturally places its hopes for future prosperity and glory that, in such times, receives renewed attention. That the third republic of France was no exception to this tendency, is shown by the advancement of the universities and schools, resulting from the indefatigable efforts of men like Dumont, Liard, Zevort, Morel, and others; by the rich pedagogical literature and by the educational budget, which shows a marvelous increase since 1870.

It would be a great mistake to infer that the empire accomplished nothing in this direction. On the contrary, Duruy's ministry, and the secondary curriculum of 1865, are eminently deserving of credit; but the demands of the republic were of a different nature and greater than those of the empire.

In his circular of September 27, 1872, Jules Simon, the Minister of Education, introduced radical changes with regard to method, after ordinances regarding gymnastics, modern languages, history, and geography had been passed in the previous year; and in order to gain uniformity in teaching and to put into operation the reforms he demanded, he prescribed monthly teachers' conferences. He increased the severity of his measures regarding obligatory gymnastics, that was not to be inferior to any other branch of study, and was to be taught by especially prepared instructors, and also attempted to create a love for military drill, and emphasized the value of riding, fencing, and swimming for the development of body and character, besides recommending walks. Moreover he invited attention to the fact that one modern language was obligatory, required that it be accorded the same importance as the classical languages, that the candidates for the bachelor's degree be examined in it, and that the students should use it in class as much as practicable, so that, if possible, they might speak it fluently when they left the school. Having recalled his previous instructions regarding history and geography, urging instruction by experiment and observation and the drawing of charts, he turned his attention to the most significant part of his circular — the teach-

ing of the classical languages, which were still taught by the methods in vogue at the Jesuit schools. The ordinance of December 10, 1802, read as follows: "In the Lycees Latin and Mathematics are the principal branches of instruction." But during the next seventy years, in accordance with the requirements of modern society, a large number of subjects were introduced into the curriculum which could not be withdrawn. Here, then, lay the problem. The number of working hours in 1802 and 1872 was the same, but the actual requirements of 1872 were greatly increased. Since the classical languages were to remain the basis of all higher education—for Latin and Greek civilization were in Jules Simon's opinion the most perfect form of the development of the human mind—the only remedy was a reform in the method. Since Latin was no longer spoken, as it had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but only read as a means to gain a knowledge of antiquity, all exercises intended to gain the former end could be dispensed with. Accordingly the amount of composition work and original Latin themes was curtailed by one-half; the writing of Latin verses was abolished altogether. The translation from the foreign tongue into the vernacular, on the other hand, was to be retained as a splendid means for the development of style, but was to be done more connectedly, and not arbitrarily torn from this or that author, since ignorance of what precedes and follows renders the understanding more difficult to the pupil. Occasionally passages of special beauty, after having been previously explained in class, were to be translated in writing. Moreover, pupils were to cease committing the text of a grammar to memory, paragraph by paragraph, mechanical memorizing being restricted at most to declensions and conjugations. Time thus gained, was, above all things, to be devoted to the reading and explaining of classical Latin and Greek authors—not the formerly used *Excerpta* and *Selectæ*—and to exercises in the mother tongue and the study of its literature. In brief, the memory-burdening word-education was to be replaced by fact-education, teaching through the instrumentality of writing was to be superseded by more oral teaching. Greater stress was also to be laid on the contents of the authors, contemporaneous history was to be studied in the masterpieces read, acquaintance with men and events was to be gained. As an incentive to the scholars and as a means of purging the state institutions of useless material, four examinations were to be held in each class with strict promotions ensuing.

These ordinances, which aroused enemies to the minister, especially in clerical circles, were all excellent and in accord with the requirements of the times. The reforms which Jules Simon put into operation, boldly and with keen insight, were also advocated by other pedagogical reformers, both French and German, notably by Michael Bréal. The great philologist chided the lack of knowledge in Greek, and ascribed it to the fact that, as in Latin, the language was not learned to be known, but to be written.

The reforms of Jules Simon fell to the ground when the clerical-monarchic

parties defeated him, and Batbie, under the new president, MacMahon, became his successor. Batbie promptly expressed his disapproval of Simon's reforms. He demanded an expression of opinion from the conseil supérieur de l'instruction publique—reorganized in 1873—with regard to the modifications of 1872 and the old method. The dean of the Faculté des lettres of Paris, H. I. G. Patin, an enthusiastic admirer of classical antiquity, made a report which was approved by the conseil supérieur, in accordance with which all the old ideas were reinstated, viz., Greek and Latin composition, writing of Latin themes, composition of Latin verses, reading of *Excerpta* and *Selectæ*, and the memorizing of grammar.

The programme of 1874 again shows how few concessions were to be made to the demands of sound pedagogy. With reference to this, de Cumont, successor to Batbie's successor, de Fourton, had the satisfaction of stating that it practically retained Duruy's curriculum of 1865. The grammatical tasks had been defined more exactly, and the list of texts for reading had been increased. As a matter of detail it may be stated that in the 8th class, corresponding to *Sexta* of the German gymnasium, besides Latin, a modern language, German or English, at option, was begun, which formerly had been deferred for two years. To counterbalance the difficulty of beginning two languages simultaneously, the requirements in Latin for the 8th and 7th classes were somewhat reduced, for the remaining classes, however, the requirements of the curriculum of 1865 were retained, though, in 1874, the humanities suffered a reduction of four recitations in the 6th and 5th classes respectively, two in the 4th, and one in each of the three following classes. Time thus gained either accrued to other studies or led to the diminution of the number of recitations per week of certain classes. This brought the instructors face to face with the difficult problem of attaining the same results with less time at their disposal. In the highest classes (*classes de philosophie*), the requirements in mathematics, science and modern languages were increased; history, in its general scope, was somewhat diminished, but the history of institutions, arts, sciences, trade, etc., at various periods and among different peoples, was accorded more time; the work of the philosophical course was specialized and the reading of authors somewhat modified.

Of the ordinances of the following years bearing on the programme of 1874, only the circular of the vice-rector of 1875 deserves mention, in which the teaching of the French language and literature was defined. By the ordinance of 1874, in the interest of a more thorough and careful training of the graduates, the final examination was divided into two parts, the first on the basis of the *Rhétorique*, the second on that of the *Classe de philosophie*. In the latter, now also a translation from German or English into French, was required, resulting from the position the modern languages had been given in the new curriculum. This idea of a double examination had originated with J. Simon, and was the only reform of his that was not discarded by the reform

of 1874. His work, *La Réforme de l'Enseignement Secondaire*, did not exert the influence due it until several years later.

The programme of 1874, which was not in harmony with the spirit of the time, could have had only a brief existence, even if it had shown better results; but its failure in this direction, caused by the overburdening of subject-matter and its improper distribution, *e. g.*, simultaneously beginning Latin and a modern language, could but hasten its downfall.

These and other objections to the prevailing system were made by the reformers, some of whom advocated the reforms of J. Simon or very similar ones, for the benefit of the lower classes and to give the great majority of students a better adapted training; others wished to create a common sub-structure, and a third party desired to abolish the study of the classical languages entirely and found the entire education on modern civilization. These all became hopeful when energetic Jules Ferry, who was determined to make a revision of the old programmes and to replace the old false methods by new ones, assumed the ministry. Before considering these reforms, however, we must briefly speak of the reorganization of the Conseil supérieur de l'instruction publique, since this in its new organization has become of vital importance for the entire later development.

By the law of the 27th of February, 1880, the system of education was relieved of the tutelage of a committee that had hitherto consisted principally of incompetent men. This advisory committee now consisted of 58 members, of whom only 13 were appointed on the motion of the minister, the others being elected. The gymnasium professors sent 8 colleagues elected from their body, 2 representatives came from the city institutions, and 6 represented the public schools. The other members were elected from among their number by the universities and learned societies. The Conseil supérieur meets according to law twice annually for short sessions, and can be called for a special session by the minister.

To this committee J. Ferry, assisted by the ministerial director of secondary education, presented his plans, and after thorough deliberation, the programme of August 2, 1880, resulted.

According to this, the instruction of the lowest classes was to be of such a nature as to develop the judgment of the pupil as well as to strengthen his memory and to accustom him to express his thoughts in logical order. The various methods and books in the grammar classes were to be replaced by grammars adapted to the age and development of the pupil for each period and each language. These books were to be marked by better arrangement than those used before, and were not, as was hitherto the case, to consist solely of a series of rules collected with a view to composition work. The memorizing of rules was to be limited to the most necessary parts, since grammar is to be learned from language and not *vice versa*—the rules, the abstract, were to be deducted from the texts, the concrete. For the same

reason the abuse of composition work was to be checked and be replaced in part by oral or blackboard exercises, by questions and reading and explanation of texts. Written composition done independently by the pupil was to be supplemented by oral composition coöperatively done in class under the direction and guidance of the instructor. The use of too detailed dictionaries, which offer a solution of almost all difficulties and even a translation of many passages, was to be restricted; the exercises in Latin verse composition were to be abolished, at most they might remain as an optional study for unusually bright and interested pupils. By these limitations and changes of method a diminution of the number of recitations, it was believed, was justifiable. More thorough attention was to be given to French; more manifold exercises, oral and written, with regard to the value and signification of words and the appropriateness and correctness of expression; in brief, exercises giving practice in the first elements of formation of style were to be introduced in the lowest classes. In the advanced classes all materials that were adapted to arouse reflection, cultivate taste, and strengthen judgment were to be utilized for French compositions. In history the written work was to be reduced, and minute details of wars and battles to be sacrificed in favor of a knowledge of institutions, habits, and customs. In teaching the history of France, especially, the general development of the institutions on which modern society is based was to be pointed out, and love for them was to be inculcated in the hearts of the pupils, who in this as well as in other branches of study were not to take a passive but an active attitude toward the instruction.

In order to introduce most of these reforms, whose aim was to gain a more direct coöperation of the pupil in the instruction, and to impose greater claims on the teachers, who now were to be educators, the Conseil supérieur justly observed the necessity of dividing the classes. Accordingly, J. Ferry, by the enactment of September 15, 1880, fixed thirty as the maximum limit of the number of students in a class, and expected the formation of parallel classes as soon as the number of pupils in a class exceeded forty. In conclusion the minister of education expressed the desire that, beginning with the sixth class (German *Quarta*), history, mathematics, and sciences should be taught by specialists.

In accordance with these reforms, Latin was postponed from the eighth to the sixth class, and Greek was put off from the sixth to the fourth class. Time thus gained was devoted principally to mathematics and science instruction, which, together with the language training, was intended to insure a harmonious development of the students' faculties. In the lower classes, object-lessons were carried on in connection with arithmetic, from the seventh class on, the drawing of geometrical figures and the elements of experimental science were taught. In the *Division de grammaire* (sixth-fourth), the fundamental principles of physics, chemistry, zoölogy, geology, and botany were

considered. In the *Classe de philosophie* the entire subject-matter was repeated and supplemented. The modern languages and drawing were now begun in the ninth class, and French was given a prominent position by the manifold exercises of a well-planned programme in all classes. In literature the students not only studied the works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but were also introduced into the classical period of the Middle Ages as well as that of the nineteenth century. Instead of Bible history in the ninth class, the scholars were to be shown pictures of important characters of ancient and modern times, to which was added in the eighth and seventh a short history of France up to 1825. In the *Classe de philosophie*, history was now also carried up to this year, and, besides, political economy had been added, while cosmography and the Latin theme had been dropped both here and in the final examination. Moreover, it is to be observed here that Greek composition had been abolished. The following programme shows the curriculum in tabulated form :

	IX, VIII, VII	VI	V	IV	III	II	RHET.	PHILOS.
Philosophy .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
French	10	3	3	3	3	4	5	..
Latin .....	..	10	10	6	5	4	4	} 1
Greek .....	..	..	..	6	5	5	4	
Modern Languages.....	4	3	3 ¹	2 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	3 ¹	1 ¹
History	2	2	2	2	3	3	} 4	3
Geography.....	2	1	1	1	1	1		..
Mathematics and Sciences	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	9
Drawing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

The curriculum of 1880, which abolished many old ideas, and therefore will ever be a milestone in French pedagogy, was a compromise. The common substructure demanded by Ferneuil and others was not yet attained, but it had been approached by postponing Latin to the sixth class. A double end was gained thereby : those pupils who left the institution after the sixth or fourth class had a more rounded-off education ; and then, bright pupils of the public schools could sooner make the attempt to enter a gymnasium, a circumstance which, in the case of a democracy whose watchword was *Égalité*, was of no mean importance. Meanwhile it was a question whether the disadvantage of all compromises—appeasing neither party—would not become apparent here also ; moreover, an attempt to reconcile antique and modern elements of education usually leads to an overburdening of pupils, which can only be prevented by uniformly planned instruction and methodical teachers. Whether, therefore, the curriculum of 1880 was to be a permanent success remains to be treated in the next paper.

J. E. B. JONAS

¹ Dont une heure prise sur l'étude.

COMMERCIAL HIGH SCHOOLS. From Annual Report (1896) of DR. EDWARD BROOKS, Superintendent of Public Schools, Philadelphia, Pa.

ONE of the significant facts of the times is the demand for an education that fits young men for the practical demands of the business world. This demand, he says, has modified the old course of studies in American schools, and in Philadelphia has established two manual training schools, put a business department in the Girls' High School, made possible the Wharton School of Finance in the University of Pennsylvania, and led to the organization of a number of private institutions with art and industrial departments. But there is no school in which boys may be prepared for commercial and business life specifically. In Europe it is recognized that brains are needed in commercial as in professional life, and the educational systems there provide for commercial high schools for training young men for industrial pursuits.

The conditions in this country today are ripe for commercial high schools. Our manufacturers are daily seeking foreign trade. It is a misfortune for our business men that so few of them speak any foreign languages, and that not many of them understand the underlying principles of political economy and of sound finance, except as they have learned them through the sometimes bitter school of experience. Not so, however, with their business rivals in Europe. The foreign youth who intends to make business his lifework prepares himself as assiduously for it as he would for a profession. The commercial high school offers him the means.

With its course in modern languages, its course in finance and political economy, its course in commercial geography combined with instruction in his own vernacular, this school prepares him for a struggle in which knowledge alone is the basis of actual judgment. Is it at all surprising that we fail to compete successfully when the business training of our youth is haphazard or largely the result of an accident? Is it to be wondered at that a business committee must go by way of Europe to investigate the conditions of trade with South America?

NOTES

NEWARK, N. J., has appropriated \$300,000 for a new high-school building. A lot has been purchased and architects are at work.

DR. W. N. BARRINGER has resigned the superintendency of schools in Newark, N. J., and Superintendent Gilbert, of St. Paul, has been elected to fill the vacancy.

THE December SCHOOL REVIEW will be devoted, according to custom, to the report of the meeting of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools.